

THE WHITE HOUSE

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**FACT SHEET: U.S. - Peru Memorandum of Understanding
for the Protection of Cultural Patrimony**

President Bush and Peruvian President Toledo have committed to a five-year renewal of an agreement to combat the trafficking in cultural artifacts from Peru.

Background: The United States recognizes the danger to Peru's archeological and cultural patrimony from the illegal trade in cultural artifacts. To help combat this trafficking, the United States and Peru signed the first "Memorandum of Understanding Concerning the Imposition of Import Restrictions on Archaeological Material from the Pre-Hispanic Cultures and Certain Ethnological Material from the Colonial Period" in June 1997. The agreement will expire in June 2002.

Framework of Cooperation: The Memorandum establishes a framework of U.S. - Peruvian cooperation to restrict the import of unauthorized Peruvian cultural artifacts into the United States, and to assist in the recovery of looted pieces discovered in the United States. A database of the collections of Peruvian museums is being created to help customs officials identify stolen goods. Additional programs under the Memorandum include preventive conservation courses for curators, training for customs and museum staff, digital videoconferences with U.S. experts, facilitative assistance for exhibitions in the U.S., and donations of equipment to Peruvian museums.

Success to date: U.S. assistance has enabled the return of almost 300 valuable artifacts to Peru, including:

- A *Chavin golden crown*. The crown, from circa 8000 BC, is an elaborate piece adorned with images of human heads with feline mouths and birdlike beaks, and was probably made by some of the first goldsmiths on the continent.
- *Lord of Sipan backflap protector*. The Sipan backflap is one of the most important pieces recovered, with an estimated value of \$1.6 million. Archaeologists believe that it was used during the 2nd century by an ancestor of the Lord of Sipan, whose tomb is one of the richest sites yet discovered in Peru.
- *208 Pre-Hispanic artifacts*.